Lit. hist v. 5.

AN

EPISTLE

TO

JUNIUS SILANUS

FROM

CORNELIUS SCIPIO.

Junius Silanus, at the Time of the Conſpiracy of Catiline, was Conſul elect. He firſt gave his Voice againſt Catiline, then changed his Mind, and voted for him. Scipio, who afterwards was killed in Africk fighting for the Liberty of Rome againſt Cæſar, wrote to Silanus this famous Epiſtle, in which he arraigns his Conduct, and renounces his Friendſhip.

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G.P.III.
BR. MUS.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

GEORGE GREENVILLE.

SIR,

THough you reſemble Silanus in the talents which you poſſeſs, and in the reputation you enjoy; yet your publick conduct has been ſo *uniform* and *conſiſtent*, that it is impoſſible to impute to your character the defects of his. Malice itſelf dares not ſay, *Mutato nomine de te fabula narrata*; I have therefore frankly dedicated to you this tranſlation; and am, in the true ſpirit of this dedication,

With great reſpect,

Your friend and ſervant,

Lincoln's-inn-fields.

The EDITOR.

AN

EPISTLE, &c.

To JUNIUS SILANUS, CORNELIUS SCIPIO *wiſhes health.*

THE friendſhip that has ſo long ſubſiſted between us, in an age where there are but few examples of permanent friendſhip, entitles, and obliges me to declare to you, Silanus, my ſentiments of your behaviour in the ſenate; when the conſcript fathers debated, and determined the queſtion concerning the puniſhment of Catiline.

I need

I need not tell you, that the eyes of all men that day were fixed on you. The offices you have held in the ſtate, the great ability with which you have executed them, your preſent high rank in the ſenate, render you moſt eminent and conſpicuous upon all occaſions; but upon the late occaſion, many circumſtances concurred to render you more conſpicuous than ever. Skilled, as you are, in the conſtitution of the Roman republic; and more perfectly acquainted than any other man with the boundaries between the prerogative of the ſenate and the privileges of the people; the conſtant enemy of popular tribunes, formerly the accuſer of this very Catiline, and the firſt to give your voice againſt him,

when he, was leſs guilty, and the republic, in leſs danger than at preſent. All theſe circumſtances marked out Silanus, and ſeemed to demand him from the ranks, to ſtand forth and combat before the eagle *. Yet you, regardleſs of your duty and your honour, to the grief of all good men, to the joy and delight of the bad, and to the aſtoniſhment of both, deſerted your poſt, went over to the enemy, and oppoſed the puniſhment of Catiline.

Think, O Silanus, with what anguiſh of ſoul your friend in public,

* In the Roman legions a few of the braveſt ſoldiers advanced and fought before the Eagle; hence they were called Ante-Signani.

and in private life, heard you utter the fatal ſound, which diſhonoured your former conduct, and blaſted the hope of your future uſefulneſs. In whom ſhall Rome place her confidence after Silanus has betrayed her? Was this a time, or was this a cauſe, to deviate from the ſtraight road of truth and juſtice, and to ſtrike into the winding-paths of ſelf-intereſt? Think of the condition of the provinces. Confuſion, diſorder and diſaffection to the government of Rome, prevail from one end to the other of her extended empire. What has inſpired ſuch unheard of inſolence and contempt of her authority? The factions of Rome, the animoſities of her ambitious ſenators, and the alternate oppoſition of contending

tending parties, to the moſt neceſſary meaſures of government. You, O Silanus, have deeply felt this, and have often bitterly lamented this fatal ſource of all our calamities. The excellent laws which you made in your firſt conſulſhip, to ſupport and eſtabliſh the authority of Rome, over the diſtant provinces, were moſt wantonly and maliciouſly repealed by the ſucceeding conſuls, merely to diſcredit you.

The pernicious conſequences of this deteſtable meaſure will long be felt at home and abroad, and preſerve the memory of the guilt, of Cimber and Metellus; but with what front can Silenus arraign their conduct, when he

himſelf, on a more important occaſion, betrayed the intereſt of his country? Rome may ſtand, may flouriſh, tho' colonies revolt and provinces rebel; though Aſia and Africk were loſt, Europe with all her kingdoms remains. But Catiline lifted his arm againſt the ſenate and people of Rome: the parricide hoped, with one blow, to diſpatch the republic, and be the heir of empire. You, Silanus, know better than any man the diſtempered condition of the ſtate; and the abſolute neceſſity of exterminating that peſt of his country. You know that the vulgar, in general, are tainted; and favour the deſigns of Catiline: that not only this city, but all Italy is full of wicked and deſperate men,

men, who wiſh for nothing but ſedition and civil war. Theſe wretches profane the name of liberty; and Catiline himſelf, in his ſpeeches to his accomplices, excites them to inſurrection and rebellion, as he ſays, to aſſert their liberty.

Every free ſtate, ſince the beginning of the world, has been overthrown by the ſame ſort of men, and by the ſame means. The name of liberty has been conſtantly uſed to introduce licentiouſneſs, and eſtabliſh tyranny. Wicked men are to be governed by fear alone: the inſtruments of faction and ſedition are only to be reſtrained by the dread of puniſhment. When the voice of

Silanus

Silanus was heard to acquit their chief, had not Cato interpoſed and rouſed the ſpirit of the ſenate, that moment had carried to the utmoſt pitch, the audacity of the factious and the miſery of Rome.

O Silanus, from what a height art thou fallen, and how low is thy honour laid! if it had been thought expedient a few days ago, to abrogate the authority of the preſent conſuls, and to chooſe a dictator, the univerſal voice of Rome would have ecchoed the name of Silanus; but no ſuch voice would now be heard in your favour.

The ſighs of your friends, the murmur of indifferent perſons, and the exultation

ultation of your enemies, mark the forlorn condition of Silanus. The only excuſe that is made for your conduct, heightens your offence and aggravates your ſhame. 'Tis ſaid that your connection with Craſſus, the overbearing influence of his wealth, determined you to act a part ſo contrary to your duty, ſo inconſiſtent with your former conduct; and ſo fatal to your reputation. Every body believes this to be the true motive, becauſe they can aſſign no other. Your behaviour was repugnant even to the intereſt of your ambition; but avarice triumphed over every conſideration.

Catiline bribed many perſons to enter into the conſpiracy; Craſſus bribed you

you to defend the conſpirators. Catiline ſeduced the young, the inconſiderate, the diſſolute, with money, of which they were in extreme neceſſity. Craſſus ſeduced the ancient, the grave, the frugal ſenator, the conſul elect, with money which he did not need.

Forgive me, Silanus, my grief, my indignation ſpeak. You have drawn upon yourſelf this ſhameful parallel; you have forced me to compare you with Cethegus and Ceparius. Was not Craſſus known, that medley of oppoſite paſſions, that ſtrange mixture of avarice and ambition, that impotent pretender to power, that eunuch

eunuch who toils and watches to deprive others of what he cannot enjoy? Has he not been, for many luſtrums, the friend and protector of every diſturber of the ſtate? The conſtant aſſociate, and aſſiſtant of Catiline, in his wicked enterprizes; and now accuſed, by Tarquinius, as privy to the conſpiracy.

I know, and you know ſtill better than I do, that it has long been his favourite object to bring you down to his lure, to gain you over to his party, and avail himſelf of your excellent talents. To your everlaſting diſhonour, to my eternal grief, he hath at laſt ſucceeded. He has

gained you; you are loſt to Rome, and to your friends. I need ſcarcely add, that I renounce your friendſhip; the ſlave of Craſſus cannot be the friend of Scipio. I ſhall follow the maxims of policy which were once your maxims; but I will not follow your example. The example of my anceſtors, of the Scipio's and Æmilius's (who never knew other intereſt than that of their country) ſhall be mine. I foreſee the dangers of ſuch a plan; but if they were greater than they are, I deſpiſe them. I read the omens of the times, and deſcry the ſtorm; but I will not ſhelter myſelf from its fury by an inglorious retreat, nor fly to the protection of any party.

party. Pompey, Craſſus, and Cæſar, are alike to me; for they all mean the ſame thing, and will ſoon attempt the deſign in which Catiline has failed. The immortal gods will determine the event. I have determined for myſelf; to devote my life to the common wealth, which can only be preſerved by ſtedfaſtly oppoſing the factious and ambitious, and executing the laws againſt thoſe notorious criminals, who, under pretence of Liberty, ſeek to ſubvert the authority of the laws and the ſenate.

Whoever is moſt ſtrenuous againſt the ſeditious is my friend, and may depend upon the voice of Scipio in

the ſenate, and upon his ſword in the field; for there, Silanus, all our differences will at laſt be determined. Mean while I am reſolved to rank myſelf with the friends of Cicero and Cato. They, I am certain, have upright intentions, and ſincerely love their country. Their worth and authority never were more ſignal, never were more ſerviceable, than in the late debate concerning Catiline. If the eloquence of Cicero had not been ſupported by the conſtancy and magnanimity of Cato, Catiline would have eſcaped condemnation; perhaps, by this time, would have reigned in the capitol.

From

From them, and from the vigour with which they inſpire the ſenate, we may expect, if not the reformation of the ſtate, at leaſt the temporary preſervation of the republick. Of you, Silanus, I prophecy that we ſhall not hear much, in our future ſtruggles, with the enemies of their country. You will not be ſo great an acquiſition to Craſſus as he imagines. Loſt, as he is, to honour and reputation, he is inſenſible of their value, and does not feel what ſhocks mankind. When he bought you, when you ſold yourſelf to him, you did what your enemies could not do; you rendered yourſelf inſignificant, and may henceforth expect to find the contempt which all good citizens

have

have for Craſſus, transferred to you, who have deliberately choſen, rather to be the dependant of Craſſus, than the friend and guardian of your country.

FINIS.